

Message Text

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SUBJ: EXCHANGES: CULTURAL PRESENTATIONS: AMERICAN PAGS FOR 1976

REF: (A) MOSCOW 10083; (B) MOSCOW 9591; (C) STATE 162671;
(D) STATE 170075; (E) STATE 172060

1. SUMMARY: A GENERAL REVEIW (JULY 24) OF THE 1976
PAG PROPOSALS, AMONG THE P&C COUNSELOR, THE HEAD OF
THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE'S DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN
RELATIONS, ANATOLIY DYUZHEV, AND GOSKONTSERT DEPUTY
DIRECTOR, V.M. KOKONIN, REVEALED THE MINISTRY AND
GOSKONTSERT TO BE IN SUBSTANTIAL AGREEMENT THAT THE
PAGS WE HAVE SUGGESTED ARE ACCEPTABLE. DESPITE
GOSKONTSERT'S EARLIER EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT THE 1976
PAGS WOULD HANDICAP THEIR FINANCIAL PLAN (REFTEL A),
THE DISCUSSION AT THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE WAS OUTWARDLY
CONCERNED SOLELY WITH (A) THE SUITABILITY OF THE AMERICAN
CONSERVATORY THEATRE'S PRODUCTIONS AND THE DOOBIE BROTHERS
STYLE OF PERFORMANCE FOR SOVIE AUDIENCES; (B) THE
POSSIBILITY OF A RETURN TRIP FOR ERNIE FORD AND THE
NEW APPEAL OF C&W; (C) A PROPOSAL THAT THE ACADEMIC
GROUP BE A BRASS BAND OF JAZZ ENSEMBLE TO COME IN THE
SUMMER AND PLAY OUTDOOR THEATERS AND STADIA; (D) A
SINCERE ENTREATY THAT THE "PRESTIGE PRESENTATION OF YOUR
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BICENTENNIAL YEAR" BE THE CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, OR

ANOTHER SERIOUS CULTURAL PRESENTATION OF EQUAL MERIT. END SUMMARY.

2. AS ON EARLIER OCCASIONS, THE MINISTRY AND GOSKONTSERT EMPHASIZED THAT THERE COULD BE NO FINAL AGREEMENT ON THE ACT REPERTORY FOR ITS USSR VISIT UNTIL ITS PRODUCTIONS WERE VIEWED BY A SOVIET REPRESENTATIVE, AT LEAST IN FULL REHEARSAL (REFTELS B AND C). (AS A PRESUMABLY CONCLUSIVE EXAMPLE OF SOVIE SENSITIVITY, MR. DYUZHEV NOTED THAT A BRITISH PRODUCTION OF SHAKESPEARE'S "PERICLES" WAS ONCE FOUND OFFENSIVE TO SOVIET TASTES AS "TOO SEXY".) THERE IS PRELIMINARY PLANNING FOR MR. KOKONIN TO BE IN SAN FRANCISCO WITHIN THE OCTOBER-DECEMBER TIME FRAME, TO SEE WHATEVER WOULD BE PROPOSED FOR PERFORMANCE IN THE USSR.

3. KOKONIN WAS PLEASED AT THE ONE DOOBIE BROTHERS RECORD HE HAS HEARD, BUT RESERVES FINAL JUDGMENT UNTIL THE TAPES AND VTR WE HAVE PROMISED HIM HAVE ARRIVED (SEE REFTELS D AND E). THERE COULD BE NO VULGAR BEHAVIOR ON STAGE, HE EMPHASIZED, NO PROVOCATIVE GESTURES OR EXTREME DRESS. THERE IS OBVIOUS EAGERNESS TO BRING IN A ROCK GROUP, AS ITS AUDIENCE IS LARGE, BUT DEAD SERIOUSNESS ABOUT THE CAVEATS NOTED ABOVE.

4. TENNESSEE ERNIE FORD WOULD BLUSH AT THE PRAISE LAVISHED ON HIM. P&C AND CU ARE CHIDED FOR NEVER BRINGING BACK ARTISTS AND GROUPS WHICH HAVE WON THE ACCLAIM OF SOVIET AUDIENCES. AS FOR ANOTHER COUNTRY AND WESTERN GROUP, AGAIN THERE WERE FULLY EXPRESSED CAVEATS ABOUT DRESS AND BEHAVIOR--BUT ALSO A MANIFEST GOSKONTSERT INTEREST, AS THE C&W STYLE NOW HAS GREAT APPEAL IN THE USSR.

5. IT IS EXPECTED THAT AN ACADEMIC GROUP COULD COME EARLY IN THE SUMMER MONTHS AND BE THE SORT TO FILL LARGE OUTDOOR THEATERS, FIELDHOUSES AND STADIA. THOUGH DYUZHEV WOULD PREFER A BRASS BAND, AND KOKONIN A JAZZ GROUP, BOTH AGREED THAT EITHER WOULD HAVE MASS APPEAL.

6. ABOVE AND BEYOND THESE MORE POPULAR ATTRACTIONS, DYUZHEV AND KOKONIN WERE ESPECIALLY INSISTENT THAT WE BEND
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EVERY EFFORT TO BRING IN THE CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA IN THE FALL OF 1976. DYUZHEV RECALLS THAT AT THE STATE DEPARTMENT IN 1973 THE LATE MME. FURTSEVA EMPHASIZED THE MINISTRY'S DESIRE TO HAVE THE CHICAGO ORCHESTRA VISIT THE USSR. THIS WAS DULY NOTED AT CU, DYUZHEV SAID, "THOUGH, OF COURSE, NO PROMISES WERE MADE." THROUGHOUT THEIR PRESENTATION DYUZHEV AND KOKONIN VIED IN PRAISING THE AMERICAN ORCHESTRAS WHICH HAVE COME TO THE USSR--MUNCH AND THE

BOSTON SYMPHONY CHANGED SOVIET ORCHESTRAL PLAYING PERMANENTLY; BERNSTEIN IS SHEER GENIUS, UNIQUE; THERE'S NOTHING LIKE THE PHILADELPHIA STRINGS, ETC. SOVIET AUDIENCES ARE AMONG THE MOST SOPHISTICATED IN THE WORLD AND WOULD KNOW HOW TO APPRECIATE THE CHICAGO SYMPHONY, SAID DYUZHEV. FURTHER, HE EMPHASIZED THAT THE PAG PROGRAM FOR 1976 SHOULD BE CAPPED BY A CULTURAL PRESENTATION OF HIGH LEVEL, AS IT IS THE BICENTENNIAL YEAR.

7. COMMENT: (1) THOUGH THE VULGAR WORD PROFIT WAS NOT OPENLY MENTIONED, IT IS OBVIOUS THAT GOSKONTSERT WELCOMES PROGRAMS WITH "MASS APPEAL". EQUALLY CLEARLY, BOTH DYUZHEV AND KOKONIN WILL BE CAREFUL IN THE ERA OF MORE RELAXED PROGRAMMING NOT TO GIVE THE KEEPERS OF CULTURAL ORTHODOXY AND EVIDENCE OF CARELESSNESS.

(2) THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE'S PITCH FOR THE CHICAGO SYMPHONY RANG TRUE. INVOKING MME. FURTSEVA'S NAME UNDERLINES THE MINISTRY'S CONTINUED HIGH-LEVEL INTEREST IN THE GROUP. THE MINISTRY EXPECTS OUR OWN SERIOUSNESS OF PURPOSE IN PLANNING PAGS TO BE MANIFEST DURING THE BICENTENNIAL YEAR. WHILE THEY SUGGEST THE CHICAGO ORCHESTRA, OBVIOUSLY ANOTHER EQUALLY "SERIOUS" PRESTIGE PROGRAM WOULD DO; BUT IT SHOULD BE FOUND SOON.

(3) THE EMBASSY IS PLEASED AT THE PROSPECT OF A BICENTENNIAL YEAR OF PAGS ALONG THE ABOVE LINES, AND WE EMPHASIZE OUR AGREEMENT WITH THE VIEW THAT THE CAP OF THE 1976 PROGRAM SHOULD BE A PRESTIGE CULTURAL EVENT, BEST PRESENTED IN THE FALL OF THE YEAR. THE CHICAGO ORCHESTRA WOULD BE PREFERRED ABOVE OTHERS.
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